Engagement:
Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat
Vol. 10, No. 04, November, 2026, pp. 961 – 973
ISSN: 2579-8375 (Print), ISSN: 2579-8391 (Online)
https://engagement.fkdp.or.id/index.php/engagement

AKSES TERBUKA

Strengthening Media Literacy and Journalistic Soft Skills among Elementary School Children through Participatory Cross-Sector Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Background: Media literacy and basic journalistic skills are increasingly important for elementary school children as they interact with various forms of media and digital information in their daily lives. Children need practical guidance to understand media content, distinguish reliable information, communicate ideas effectively, and engage responsibly with digital media. A participatory and community-driven learning approach can provide children with opportunities to actively develop these competencies.

Purpose of the study: This community service program aimed to strengthen media literacy and basic journalistic skills among elementary school children through a participatory and community-based approach involving CIA Magazine, WARIOR (Junior Journalist), and the Institute of Digital Media Emtek (IMDE).

Methods: The program involved thirteen children from grades 1–5 and was conducted on May 5, 2026, at the IMDE Campus and EMTEK studio. An educational-participatory approach was employed, allowing children to actively share their experiences with media, participate in discussions, practice interviews and the 5W+1H news structure, engage in role-playing activities as reporters and television presenters, and conduct direct observations during a studio visit. Participants' understanding and performance were evaluated through observation of their participation, communication, interview practices, and reporting simulations.

Results: Post-activity evaluation showed that 12 of 13 participants (92.3%) were able to communicate their understanding of media functions, formulate basic journalistic questions using the 5W+1H elements, and present their observations during interview and reporting simulations. One participant, who was still in grade 1, required additional guidance in verbally expressing the concepts learned during the activity. Participants also demonstrated increased confidence, communication skills, critical thinking, and creative expression throughout the learning process. These findings indicate that participatory and community-based learning supported by cross-sector collaboration can effectively strengthen children's media literacy and foundational journalistic skills, while emphasizing the importance of involving children as active participants rather than merely recipients in community-based media literacy education.

Keywords
Media Literacy; Journalistic Skills; Elementary School Children; Participatory Learning; Community-based Education; Cross-sector Collaboration

Article History:
Received: Jul 23rd 2026
Revised: Aug 05th 2026
Accepted: Nov 30th 2026

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Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology and the internet has significantly transformed the communication environment in which children grow and learn. Children are no longer exposed only to conventional media such as television, magazines, and printed books, but also to social media, video-streaming platforms, online games, and interactive communication applications. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet penetration in Indonesia reached 79.5% of the national population in 2024, indicating that digital media have become an integral part of everyday life (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). Children and adolescents are among the most active groups engaging with digital content, making media literacy increasingly important from an early age.

Although digital media offer opportunities for learning, creativity, and social interaction, they also expose children to various risks, including misinformation and hoaxes, violent content, hate speech, cyberbullying, and misuse of personal information. Due to their developing cognitive abilities, elementary school children may experience difficulties distinguishing facts from opinions and assessing the credibility of information (Livingstone, 2004; Potter, 2019). Therefore, children need not only technical abilities to access media but also critical skills to understand, evaluate, and responsibly produce media content.

UNESCO defines media and information literacy as a set of competencies that enables individuals to access, analyze, evaluate, and create information and media content in various forms (UNESCO, 2013). Media literacy therefore involves critical thinking, ethical media use, and an understanding of how media messages are produced and interpreted (Hobbs, 2010). Introducing these competencies during elementary school is particularly relevant because children at this stage begin to develop logical thinking based on concrete experiences, as described in Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Piaget and Inhelder (1972) From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky also emphasizes the importance of interaction, guidance, and collaborative learning in supporting children's cognitive development. Similarly, Bandura's social learning theory explains that children learn effectively through observation, modeling, practice, and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). These perspectives support the use of contextual, participatory, and practice-based approaches to media literacy education.

One practical approach is children's journalism or the "young reporter" model. Rather than positioning children merely as passive media consumers, this approach encourages them to become active participants in observing events, identifying facts, formulating questions using the 5W+1H framework, conducting interviews, and communicating their findings. Such activities can simultaneously develop media literacy and essential twenty-first-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (Jenkins et al., 2006). Direct journalistic practice may also help strengthen children's confidence, public speaking ability, curiosity, and responsible media use.

The program was developed through a participatory needs-identification process rather than being solely determined by the implementing institutions. Prior to the activity, informal discussions and communication with children, parents, and facilitators indicated that participants were highly familiar with digital media but had limited opportunities to critically discuss media content or practice basic journalistic skills. Initial observations also showed that several children were able to mention examples of media they frequently used, but their understanding of media functions, the role and responsibilities of journalists, the 5W+1H structure, and methods for verifying information remained limited. Based on the initial assessment, 12 of 13 participants (92, 3%) were able to identify basic media functions, while only 12 of 13 participants (92,3%) were able to formulate simple questions using the 5W+1H framework without assistance. These findings became the basis for determining the learning activities and the type of assistance required by the participants.

Children's interests and experiences were also considered in shaping the program. During the initial interaction, participants were encouraged to share the types of media they used, the content they commonly encountered, and the activities they wanted to experience as young reporters. This participatory process informed the design of practical activities, including interactive discussions, interview simulations, role-playing as reporters and television presenters, and direct observation of a professional media environment. Thus, the children were positioned not simply as recipients of a predetermined program but as active participants whose experiences and learning needs contributed to the implementation of the activity.

Based on these identified needs, CIA Magazine, WARIOR (Junior Journalist), and the Institute of Digital Media Emtek (IMDE) collaborated to implement a community-based media literacy and journalism program for elementary school children. The collaboration combined the community's understanding of children's interests, journalistic mentoring, academic resources, and direct exposure to the media industry. Such cross-sector collaboration was intended to connect conceptual knowledge with practical media experience while maintaining a participatory learning process.

Accordingly, this community service program aimed to: (1) improve elementary school children's understanding of media functions and the roles and responsibilities of journalists; (2) develop their ability to formulate interview questions using the 5W+1H framework and conduct simple interviews; (3) strengthen their confidence and communication skills through role-playing as reporters and television presenters; and (4) develop a participatory model of collaboration among communities, academic institutions, and the media industry in supporting children's media literacy and foundational journalistic skills.

Method

This community service program was conducted on May 5, 2026, at two locations: the Institute of Digital Media Emtek (IMDE) Campus for the introductory and practical learning sessions, and the EMTEK studio for field observation and an educational studio tour. The program involved 13 elementary school children from grades 1 to 5. An educational-participatory approach was employed to encourage participants to actively engage in discussions, simulations, role-playing, observation, and reflection throughout the program. This approach is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, which emphasizes that children learn effectively through social interaction, guided participation, and scaffolding.

The program consisted of five interconnected stages: (1) participatory preparation and needs identification, (2) media literacy and journalism learning sessions, (3) young reporter and television host practice, (4) EMTEK studio tour and direct observation, and (5) evaluation and reflection. The stages of the program are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Flowchart of the Community Service Program

Participatory Preparation and Needs Identification

The preparation stage was conducted approximately one month before the implementation of the program and involved representatives from CIA Magazine, WARIOR (Junior Journalist), and IMDE. To strengthen the participatory and community-based nature of the program, the preparation process was not limited to decisions made by the implementing institutions. Informal discussions with children, facilitators, and parents were used to identify participants' interests, previous experiences, and learning needs related to media and journalism.

The initial discussions indicated that the children were familiar with various forms of digital media but still required guidance in understanding media functions, identifying reliable information, developing journalistic questions, and communicating information systematically. Participants also expressed interest in experiencing the roles of reporters and television presenters. These identified needs and interests were incorporated into the design of the learning activities, particularly interview practice, 5W+1H exercises, television host simulations, and direct observation of a professional media environment. Thus, participants were positioned as active contributors to the learning process rather than merely recipients of a predetermined program.

Participants were selected purposively through the CIA Magazine and WARIOR networks. The participant selection criteria were: (1) elementary school students from grades 1 to 5; (2) having an interest in media, communication, or children's journalism activities; (3) being willing and able to participate in the entire program; and (4) receiving parental or guardian permission to participate. A total of 13 children met these criteria and participated in all major activities.

Several participants had previously attended journalism-related activities organized by CIA Magazine and WARIOR. Therefore, they could not be considered complete beginners. Their previous exposure may have contributed to their initial familiarity with media and journalism concepts. This characteristic represents a potential selection bias and should be considered when interpreting the results. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized directly to all elementary school children, particularly those who have never participated in media literacy or journalism activities.

Based on the needs assessment, the organizing team developed learning materials appropriate to the cognitive characteristics of elementary school children. These included visually engaging presentation materials, 5W+1H learning cards, worksheets for developing interview questions, and simple scripts for television presenter simulations. The materials were designed according to Piaget and Inhelder (1972) concrete operational stage, emphasizing practical examples, visual stimulation, direct experiences, and interactive activities.

The team also coordinated the use of rooms and facilities at the IMDE Campus and arranged the schedule and educational tour with the EMTEK studio. Evaluation instruments were prepared prior to implementation, including an active-participation observation sheet, a rubric for assessing participants' ability to formulate interview questions, and an oral presentation rubric. These instruments were developed based on basic indicators of media literacy, journalism skills, and communication performance.

Media Literacy and Journalism Learning Sessions

The main activities at the IMDE Campus began in the morning and were designed to create an engaging and child-friendly learning environment. The first learning session focused on media introduction and media literacy. Participants were introduced to the definition of media, different types of media—including print, electronic, and digital media—and the functions of media in everyday life.

The session was delivered through interactive storytelling, short videos, questions, and discussions. Children were encouraged to identify the media they frequently used and explain why they were interested in particular media content. Rather than receiving information through a one-way lecture, participants were invited to share their own media experiences and discuss the functions of media as sources of information, education, entertainment, and self-expression (Buckingham, 2003; Silverblatt et al. 2014).



Figure 2. Media Literacy and Journalism Learning Session at IMDE

The second session introduced participants to the role of reporters and the basic elements of news. Facilitators from WARIOR explained the responsibilities of reporters, including finding information, interviewing sources, verifying basic facts, and communicating information clearly. Children were introduced to the 5W+1H framework—*what, who, where, when, why,* and *how*—through an educational activity called "News Bingo." The activity encouraged participants to identify essential information from simple events and transform the information into journalistic questions (Romli, 2016).

Young Reporter and Television Host Practice

The third stage focused on developing participants' practical journalistic skills. Children were divided into small groups and provided with simple topics. Each group was asked to formulate interview questions using the 5W+1H framework. Participants then conducted interview simulations in which one child acted as a reporter and another acted as an interviewee.

Facilitators provided guidance according to each participant's age and level of ability. Younger participants received additional assistance in formulating questions and organizing their ideas. The use of gradual guidance reflected Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding, in which facilitators provide appropriate support until learners are able to perform the task more independently.

The participants subsequently practiced becoming television presenters. Each child received a short script and was invited to read it in front of a camera while practicing eye contact, voice intonation, articulation, facial expression, and presentation structure. This activity was designed to strengthen confidence, public speaking skills, and communication abilities through observation, imitation, and direct practice, consistent with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory.



Figure 3. Television Presenter and Teleprompter Practice

During these activities, the children were not only asked to follow predetermined instructions but were encouraged to develop their own questions, choose ways of presenting information, and respond to their peers. This participatory format provided opportunities for children to contribute ideas and actively shape their learning experiences.

EMTEK Studio Tour and Direct Observation

Following the activities at the IMDE Campus, participants visited the EMTEK studio for direct observation of a professional media production environment. The studio tour was guided by the EMTEK public relations team and accompanied by IMDE lecturers and media practitioners.

During the tour, participants observed professional media-production equipment, including cameras, boom microphones, studio lighting, and control-room equipment. They also visited several Indosiar studios and observed the physical environment in which television programs are produced. In one studio, participants were given an opportunity to experience the atmosphere of a television production set and observe the roles of different production personnel.

The facilitators also explained the differences between live broadcasts and recorded programs, as well as the functions of various members of a television production team. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and connect their observations with the media concepts previously discussed at the IMDE Campus.

The studio visit provided contextual and experiential learning by connecting media literacy concepts with actual media industry practices. Such direct observation helped participants understand that television programs and other media products are produced through coordinated professional processes involving multiple roles and responsibilities (Croteau & Hoynes, 2019).

Evaluation and Participatory Reflection

Evaluation was conducted both during and after the program using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The assessment focused on participants' active involvement, their ability to formulate interview questions, their understanding of basic media and journalism concepts, their confidence during simulations, and their oral communication skills.

Three main instruments were used. First, an active-participation observation sheet employed a four-point scale ranging from 1 (*very low*) to 4 (*very good*) to assess children's engagement in discussions, questioning, simulations, and observation activities. Second, the journalistic-question rubric assessed participants' ability to formulate relevant questions based on the 5W+1H elements. Third, the oral presentation rubric assessed articulation, eye contact, confidence, and the logical organization of information.

Quantitative scores obtained from the assessment rubrics were analyzed descriptively to determine the level of participant achievement. Qualitative data derived from facilitator observations, field notes, children's responses, and reflection activities were analyzed thematically to identify changes in understanding, confidence, communication, and participation during the program.

At the end of the activity, participants were invited to reflect on what they had learned, which activities they enjoyed or considered most useful, and which media or journalistic skills they wished to develop further. This reflection was important because evaluation was not conducted solely by the facilitators; children's experiences and responses were also treated as part of the assessment and as input for improving future programs.

The main equipment and learning materials used during the program included a projector, screen, laptop, participant worksheets, 5W+1H learning cards, television presenter scripts, and mobile-phone cameras for recording presentation practice. All learning media were adapted to the developmental characteristics of elementary school children through the use of visual materials, interactive activities, movement, and social interaction (Piaget and Inhelder 1972).

Methodological Limitations

This program involved only 13 participants who were purposively recruited through CIA Magazine and WARIOR. Several participants had previously participated in journalism-related activities, meaning that the group did not represent children with no prior exposure to journalism or media literacy. Their previous experience may have contributed to their performance during the program and may have influenced the magnitude of the observed outcomes. Therefore, the results should be interpreted specifically within the context of this participant group and should not be generalized to the broader population of elementary school children.

Future programs should involve larger and more diverse participant groups, including children with and without previous journalism experience. The use of systematic pre-test and post-

test measurements is also recommended to provide stronger evidence of changes in media literacy, journalistic knowledge, communication skills, and confidence.

Result

The community service program involved 13 elementary school children from grades 1 to 5. Throughout the activities, participants demonstrated a high level of engagement, particularly during interactive discussions, interview simulations, television presenter practice, and the studio tour. Based on the active-participation observation sheet, the participants achieved an average participation score of 3.4 on a four-point scale. Eleven of the 13 participants (84.6%) demonstrated active participation throughout the sessions, while two participants (15.4%) showed gradual improvement in participation as the activities progressed.

Baseline Condition of Participants

Prior to the program, participants had varying levels of familiarity with media and journalism. Several participants had previously participated in children's journalism activities facilitated by CIA Magazine and WARIOR. Therefore, they could not be categorized as complete beginners. Initial observations and informal discussions indicated that most participants were familiar with media primarily as sources of entertainment, such as watching cartoons on YouTube or reading illustrated magazines. However, their understanding of broader media functions, journalistic responsibilities, critical evaluation of information, and systematic use of the 5W+1H framework remained varied.

A standardized quantitative pre-test was not administered before the activity. Consequently, numerical changes between pre-program and post-program conditions could not be calculated. The baseline information presented in this study was derived from initial observations, informal discussions, and participants' responses during the opening activities.

Understanding of Media Functions

At the end of the program, 12 of the 13 participants (92.3%) were able to correctly identify at least three major functions of media, namely information, education, and entertainment. Eight participants (61.5%) were also able to identify media as a means of communication and self-expression. These results indicate that most participants were able to explain media functions beyond entertainment after completing the activities.

Understanding of the Reporter's Role

Participants were also assessed on their understanding of the role and responsibilities of reporters. The average score for this aspect was 3.5 on a four-point scale. The highest score was obtained for the indicator related to identifying the reporter's responsibility to seek and collect information, with an average score of 3.8. The lowest score was recorded for understanding journalistic ethics, with an average score of 3.1, indicating that this area still required further reinforcement.

Journalistic Question-Formulation Skills

The assessment of interview-question formulation showed an average score of 3.2 on a four-point scale. Nine of the 13 participants (69.2%) were able to formulate interview questions containing at least four of the six elements of the 5W+1H framework. Four participants (30.8%) still required facilitator assistance, particularly in developing questions related to the "why" and "how" elements.

During the interview simulations, participants demonstrated different levels of confidence. Some participants who initially appeared hesitant gradually became more willing to ask questions

and present the results of their interviews after receiving facilitator guidance and observing their peers.

Ability to Distinguish Facts and Opinions

Participants were introduced to simple exercises for distinguishing factual information from opinion. Ten of the 13 participants (76.9%) were able to distinguish facts from opinions in a simple news example with facilitator guidance. Three participants still required additional explanation and examples before they could identify the difference consistently.

Communication and Presentation Skills

During the television presenter and reporting simulations, participants practiced articulation, eye contact, voice intonation, and the organization of information. Field observations showed that most participants became increasingly willing to speak in front of others and communicate their ideas during the activity. Younger participants generally required more guidance in organizing their ideas and expressing them verbally.

Studio Tour Experience

The EMTEK studio tour provided participants with direct exposure to professional media-production processes. Participants observed television studios, production equipment, and the roles of different media-production personnel. According to field notes and participants' reflections, all 13 participants (100%) identified the studio tour as the most memorable activity and reported gaining new knowledge about the television-production process.

Overall, the post-program assessment showed that 92.3% of participants could identify at least three media functions, 69.2% could formulate journalistic questions incorporating at least four elements of 5W+1H, 76.9% could distinguish facts from opinions with facilitator guidance, and 84.6% demonstrated active participation throughout the program. These figures represent participants' achievement at the end of the program rather than percentage improvements from baseline because no standardized quantitative pre-test was administered.

Discussion

The findings indicate that participatory and experiential activities can support the development of media literacy and foundational journalistic skills among elementary school children. The combination of interactive discussions, interview simulations, reporter role-play, television presenter practice, and direct observation allowed participants to engage with media concepts through concrete experiences rather than through theoretical instruction alone. This finding is consistent with Hobbs (2010) and Mihailidis (2014), who emphasize the importance of active and experiential learning in media literacy education.

The finding that 12 of 13 participants (92.3%) were able to identify at least three media functions suggests that participants developed a broader understanding of media beyond its entertainment function. This is relevant to Buckingham's (2003) argument that media education should enable children to understand media as socially constructed forms of communication rather than merely as sources of entertainment. The ability to identify informational, educational, entertainment, communication, and expressive functions represents an important foundation for developing critical awareness of media (Silverblatt et al. 2014.; Potter, 2019).

The results related to journalistic-question formulation were more varied. Although 69.2% of participants were able to formulate questions containing at least four 5W+1H elements, several children still experienced difficulties with the more analytical "why" and "how" questions. This finding suggests that identifying basic information may be easier for elementary school children than developing questions requiring causal or process-oriented reasoning. Continued practice and

age-appropriate scaffolding are therefore necessary. This process is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the *zone of proximal development*, in which learners can perform increasingly complex tasks through appropriate guidance from facilitators and peers.

The gradual increase in participants' willingness to speak, conduct interviews, and perform in front of others can also be interpreted through Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Observing peers successfully perform reporting and presentation activities, followed by opportunities to practice similar tasks, may support confidence and self-efficacy. Nevertheless, because the study did not employ standardized pre-test and post-test measures of self-confidence, these observations should be interpreted as qualitative changes during the activity rather than statistically verified improvements.

The studio tour added an important experiential dimension to the program. All participants identified the studio visit as the most memorable component of the activity. Direct exposure to cameras, production facilities, control rooms, and professional media personnel enabled participants to connect classroom concepts with actual media-production practices. This supports the argument of Croteau and Hoynes (2019) that media literacy involves understanding not only media content but also the institutional and production processes through which media products are created.

Participatory and Bottom-Up Dimensions of the Program

Although the program employed participatory learning methods and encouraged children to share experiences, ask questions, participate in simulations, and provide reflections, the program should not be characterized as entirely bottom-up. The institutional framework, major learning objectives, schedule, learning materials, and studio-tour arrangements were largely developed by CIA Magazine, WARIOR, IMDE, and EMTEK.

Children's interests and experiences contributed to the implementation and adjustment of learning activities, but they did not have full decision-making authority over the overall program design. Therefore, the program is more accurately described as a participatory cross-sector program with emerging bottom-up elements**,** rather than a fully community-driven intervention.

Future implementation could strengthen the bottom-up approach by involving children, parents, facilitators, and community representatives more systematically during the needs-assessment and planning stages. For example, focus-group discussions or participatory planning meetings could be conducted before the program to identify children's media-use patterns, concerns, preferred learning activities, and topics they wish to explore.

Cross-Sector Collaboration and Sustainability

Collaboration among CIA Magazine, WARIOR, IMDE, and EMTEK provided complementary resources. CIA Magazine and WARIOR contributed experience in children's journalism and access to participants, IMDE provided academic expertise and educational facilities, while EMTEK offered direct exposure to professional media-production environments. This cross-sector collaboration enabled theoretical learning to be connected with journalistic practice and media-industry experience.

However, the present activity was conducted as a short-term program, and the available evidence does not demonstrate that it has yet produced sustainable institutional change. No formal mechanism such as a permanent youth media forum, regular mentoring structure, long-term curriculum, or institutionalized follow-up program was established as part of this activity. Therefore, sustainability should be regarded as an area for future development rather than as an

achieved outcome.

A more sustainable model could include periodic journalism workshops, mentoring by WARIOR and media practitioners, continued collaboration with schools or community learning centers, children's media-production projects, and regular opportunities for participants to publish or present their work. Establishing such mechanisms would allow the collaboration to move beyond a one-day activity toward a continuing community-based media literacy program.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the program involved only 13 participants, limiting the generalizability of the results. Second, the intervention was conducted over a short period of one day, making it impossible to determine whether the observed knowledge and skills were retained over time.

Third, several participants had previous experience with journalism activities organized by CIA Magazine and WARIOR. Their prior exposure represents a potential confounding variable because their post-program performance may have been influenced partly by previous learning rather than exclusively by the present intervention. Therefore, the results may not represent outcomes that would be achieved among children with no prior media-literacy or journalism experience.

Fourth, no standardized quantitative pre-test was administered. As a result, the percentages reported in this study represent post-program achievement rather than measured increases from baseline. Fifth, the program did not include a control or comparison group, making it impossible to attribute the observed outcomes exclusively to the intervention.

Finally, no long-term follow-up was conducted to determine whether participants subsequently applied critical media-literacy skills in their daily digital-media use. Future studies should employ a more rigorous pre-test and post-test design, involve larger and more diverse participant groups, include participants with and without previous journalism experience, and conduct follow-up assessments to evaluate the sustainability of learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The community service program conducted on May 5, 2026, at the Institute of Digital Media Emtek (IMDE) Campus and the EMTEK studio achieved its main objectives of strengthening media literacy and foundational journalistic skills among 13 elementary school children from grades 1 to 5. Through participatory learning activities, including interactive discussions, 5W+1H exercises, interview simulations, television presenter role-playing, and direct observation of professional media production, participants demonstrated positive post-program learning outcomes.

The post-program assessment showed that 12 of 13 participants (92.3%) were able to identify at least three functions of media, while 9 participants (69.2%) were able to formulate basic journalistic questions containing at least four of the six 5W+1H elements. In addition, 10 participants (76.9%) were able to distinguish facts from opinions with facilitator guidance, and 11 participants (84.6%) demonstrated active participation throughout the program. These results indicate that the program objectives related to media understanding, basic journalistic skills, critical engagement with information, communication, and active participation were achieved at the post-program assessment level.

The collaboration among CIA Magazine, WARIOR (Junior Journalist), IMDE, and EMTEK provided complementary contributions to the program. CIA Magazine and WARIOR contributed experience in children's journalism and facilitated participant engagement, IMDE

provided academic expertise and learning facilities, and EMTEK offered direct exposure to a professional media-production environment. This cross-sector collaboration created an experiential learning environment that connected basic media-literacy concepts with practical journalistic activities and real-world media production.

However, the participatory nature of the program should not be interpreted as a fully bottom-up model. Although children were actively involved in discussions, simulations, reflections, and the expression of their interests and experiences, the overall objectives, learning framework, materials, and major activities were primarily developed by the collaborating institutions. Therefore, the program is more appropriately characterized as a participatory cross-sector initiative with emerging bottom-up elements. Future programs should involve children, parents, teachers, and community representatives more systematically from the needs-identification and planning stages so that participants have a stronger role in determining learning priorities and activities.

Several limitations should also be considered. The program involved a relatively small number of participants, was implemented within a single day, and included children who had varying levels of previous exposure to journalism activities. Furthermore, no standardized pre-test, control group, or long-term follow-up assessment was conducted. Therefore, the percentages reported in this study represent post-program achievement rather than statistically measured improvement attributable exclusively to the intervention.

Future community service programs should involve larger and more diverse groups of children, including those with no previous journalism experience, and employ systematic pre-test and post-test assessments. Longer-term mentoring, periodic journalism activities, and follow-up evaluations are also recommended to assess whether media-literacy and journalistic skills are maintained and applied in children's daily media use. More importantly, future iterations should strengthen participatory co-design by involving children and their communities from the initial planning stage, thereby developing a more sustainable and genuinely community-driven model of media literacy education.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to CIA Magazine and WARIOR (Junior Journalist) for facilitating participant involvement and contributing to the planning and implementation of the program. Appreciation is also extended to EMTEK for providing the participants with the opportunity to visit its studio and gain valuable firsthand experience of a professional media-production environment. The authors also thank the Institute of Digital Media Emtek (IMDE) for providing facilities, academic support, and resources that contributed to the successful implementation of the program. Finally, sincere appreciation is extended to all participating children and their parents for their enthusiasm, cooperation, and support throughout the program.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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